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- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **GENZYME CORPORATION** [US/US]; Legal Department, 15 Pleasant St. Connector, Framingham, MA 01701-9322 (US).
- (72) Inventors; and
- (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **COURY, Arthur, J.** [US/US]; 154 Warren Avenue, Boston, MA 02116-5933 (US). **PHILBROOK, C., Michael** [US/US]; 365 Marlborough Street #6, Boston, MA 02115 (US). **SKINNER, Kevin, C.** [US/US]; 8 Midland Circle, Andover, MA 01810 (US).
- (74) Agent: **BLUNDELL, Isabelle, A., S.**; Genzyme Corporation, One Kendall Square, Cambridge, MA 02139 (US).
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(54) Title: CONTROLLED RELEASE OF ANTI-ARRHYTHMIC AGENTS

(57) **Abstract:** Methods for the simple, reliable application and local controlled release of selected anti-arrhythmia drugs from a hydrogel applied to or polymerized on the tissues of the heart or its vessels, especially in conjunction with cardiac bypass or other cardiac surgery, have been developed. The anti-arrhythmia drugs are incorporated along with an anti-inflammatory agent into hydrogels that biodegrade and adhere to the tissues to which the anti-arrhythmic drugs are to be delivered. The hydrogels may be formed *in vitro* or *in vivo*. In a preferred embodiment, the drugs are effective to lengthen atrial effective refractory period and minimize the inflammatory response. A particularly preferred drug is amiodarone and dexamethasone.

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